

Evaluation of Indiana's First Steps Early Intervention System

April 2005

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<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/ecc/downloads/March2005Report.pdf>

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

Acknowledgements

Dear First Steps Families and Service Coordinators,

We continue to be grateful to all the Service Coordinators and families who are taking the time and making the effort to contribute to the First Steps Evaluation Project. We know that we are creating a better system through your combined efforts.

Thank you all.

Contents

List of Tables / 5

List of Figures / 5

Introduction / 6

1. Data Collection and Analysis / 7

1.01 *Demographic Information* / 8

2. Results

2.01 *Outcome #1: Children attain essential and important developmental skills* / 15

2.02 *Outcome #2: Children participate in inclusive community activities, settings, and routines* / 22

2.03 *Outcome #3: Children (and families) are safe, healthy, and well nourished* / 23

2.04 *Outcome #4: Families participate as members of the early intervention team and carry out recommendations that help them to help their child* / 24

2.05 *Outcome #5: Families are connected to other families and natural community supports for emotional support during self-identified times of need* / 25

2.06 *Outcome #6: Families advocate by exercising their rights in requesting and choosing goals, services, and supports* / 26

3. Appendix B: Transition Information / 28

4. Appendix C: County by County Data Return Rates / 30

List of Tables

Tables

1. First Steps Outcomes / 7
2. Average Age at Entry for All Children Entering 6/30/03 to 7/1/04 / 8
3. Mean Age at Exit and Mean Number of Months in First Steps, for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages / 9
4. Mean Number of Hours per Month of Services Received and (Mean Number of Total hours of Services in parenthesis) Received by Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages / 9
5. Frequency of Eligibility Categories in First Steps for All Children Entering 6/30/03 to 7/1/04 / 11
6. Mean Age at Entry, Mean Number of Months in First Steps, and Mean Age at Exit for Children with Different Eligibility Criteria / 12
7. Mean Number of Hours per Month of Services Received and (Mean Total Hours of Services Received in parenthesis) by Children with Different Eligibility Criteria / 13
8. Mean Months Developmental Gain for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages / 16
9. Mean Months Developmental Gain for Children with Different Eligibility Criteria / 17
10. Mean Number of Skills, Family Routines and Community Routines Gained by Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages / 18
11. Mean Number of Skills, Family Routines and Community Routines Gained by Children With Different Eligibility Criteria / 19
12. Percent of Three-Year Olds Participating in Community Activities “All the Time” / 22
13. Transition Choices for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages / 27
14. Transition Choices for Children With Different Eligibility Criteria / 28
15. Return Rates of First Steps Entry Data by County / 29
16. Return Rates of First Steps Exit Data by County / 32

List of Figures

Figures

1. Average Total Hours Services Received / 8
2. Total Months Developmental Gain in Entry/Exit Children / 15
3. Developmental Areas in Which Children Continued to Need Services / 20
4. Types of Settings/ Services Following First Steps / 21

Introduction

Indiana's First Steps Early Intervention System serves thousands of children and families each year, and has grown dramatically since its inception. Because of the success First Steps has experienced in identifying and finding children and families who are in need of early intervention services, the Bureau of Child Development, Division of Families and Children, Family and Social Services Administration has asked this question:

What impact is Indiana's First Steps Early Intervention System having on the children and families it serves?

Over the past few years, the Bureau of Child Development has contracted with the Early Childhood Center at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Indiana University to develop and implement a statewide evaluation system that answers this question. The Bureau of Child Development undertook this task for several reasons. First, a statewide, outcomes-based, evaluation system would enable documentation and communication of the benefits of First Steps to major decision-makers at local and state levels. Second, it would help to expand the focus beyond compliance with the law to include service quality. Third, it would provide information for improving services, particularly in tying training efforts to supporting desired outcomes. Finally, a statewide evaluation system would provide the information needed to continuously plan for the future.

The Early Childhood Center developed an evaluation system that strives to reflect the following features and guiding principles:

- The evaluation system is *statewide* (it touches all children and families receiving First Steps services) and *ongoing* (not a one-shot investigation).
- The focus is on the *outcomes* of First Steps for children, families and communities, not on services or procedures.
- Data collection procedures are *embedded into ongoing service routines* (to minimize, as much as possible, its intrusiveness and time consumption) and are locally implemented by service providers (no independent/outside investigators collecting data).
- Data analyses and findings are *understandable, accessible, and useable* in guiding local and state quality improvement efforts.

A final feature of the evaluation system was to *develop it with considerable input from all major stakeholders* of First Steps: families, providers, local decision makers, and state policy makers. At each step in the development process, from identifying key program outcomes, to piloting various data collection instruments and surveys, to implementing the system statewide, input from program consumers, providers, and decision makers has been, and will continue to be, sought.

Data Collection and Analyses

The statewide implementation of the First Steps evaluation system began November 1, 2002. The goal of the system is to assess First Step's impact on all children and families exiting First Steps who have been in the system for a minimum of six months. Data collection has focused exclusively on measuring the impact of First Steps on the first six outcomes presented in Table 1.

Data is collected on children and families *entering* First Steps from three sources: 1) at intake with portions of the Combined Enrollment Form, 2) during the initial evaluation through the Family Interview, and 3) at the initial IFSP meeting with portions of the completed IFSP. Service Coordinators are asked to assemble and send documents from these three sources to the Early Childhood Center for data entry. Data is also collected on

children and families *exiting* First Steps. Service Coordinators are asked to conduct an Exit Interview with the family, and include developmental data from the other members of the team. The forms that are used to collect information from entering and exiting children and families are available on the First Steps web site: http://www.state.in.us/fssa/first_step/outcomeseval.html.

This report summarizes the data collected for children and families exiting First Steps between July 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004. During this period of time, a total of 6220 children entered and/or exited First Steps. There were 2543 families who exited First Steps. Of this group, 1947 families were in the program for a minimum of 6 months. A total of 5707 families entered First Steps. For families *entering* First Steps, complete data was collected on 3266 families, or approximately 57% of all entering families. Another 793 forms (representing 14% of the families) were returned only partially completed. This data was unusable for this report. Of the incomplete entry forms, 49% were missing Family Interviews, and 87% were missing Combined Enrollment form data. All IFSPs, (100%) were received. Of the families *exiting* First Steps who

Table 1
First Steps Outcomes

1. Children attain essential and important developmental skills.
2. Children participate in inclusive community activities, settings, and routines.
3. Children (and families) are safe, healthy, and well nourished.
4. Families participate as members of the early intervention team and carry out recommendations that help them to help their child.
5. Families are connected to other families, associations, and organizations for emotional support.
6. Families advocate by exercising their rights in requesting and choosing goals, services, and supports.
7. Communities are informed and promptly refer families to First Steps.
8. Communities welcome and fully include children with disabilities and their families (e.g., child care, transportation, retail, housing, employment).
9. Communities provide all families access to health care services.

had been in the program a minimum of 6 months, complete exit data was collected for 42%, or 826 families.

Demographic Information

The following pages contain information on the group as a whole, as well as three major subgroups of children who participated in the First Steps system during our data period.

Analyses were conducted to find if there were differences in terms of the early intervention services received, and in terms of Child and Family Outcomes for two groups of children (eligibility status, age at entry) who had been in the system for a minimum of 6 months. This reflected long-standing decision made by the state Bureau of Child Development and IIDC.

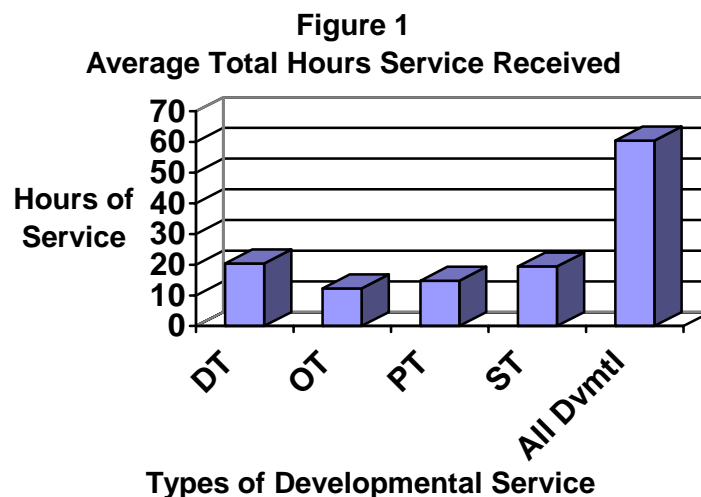
1. Demographics for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages

a. Descriptive Information for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages

Table 2 presents frequency information for the groups of children and families entering the First Steps system at different ages.

Table 2		
Average Age at Entry for All Children Entering 7/1/04 to 12/31/04		
Age at Entry	N	%
Birth – 12 months	2237	36.0
13-24 months	2014	32.4
24-36 months	1969	31.7
Total 6-30-03 to 7-1-04	6220	100.0

Figure 1 describes the total hours of services received for all children across the four major developmental therapies.



b. Differences in Early Intervention Services for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages

Table 3 presents the mean number of months and the mean age at exit for children entering First Steps at different ages who received at least six months of service.

	Age at Entry			All children
	Birth – 12 months	13 – 24 months	25 – 36+ months	
N	972	792	779	2543
Age at Exit	21.66	30.96	35.86	28.91
Months Served	16.04	11.96	7.10	12.03

A one-way analysis of variance revealed differences among the age groups for the following dependent variables:

- Months Served, $F(2,2542)=273.55$ $p<.01$;
- Age at Exit, $F(2,2542)=726.34$ $p<.01$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test revealed significant ($p<.01$) differences between all groups.

Table 4 presents mean number of hours total service received and the mean number of hours per month by children entering First Steps at different ages and who have received at least six months of service.

Type of Service	Age At Entry		
	0-12 mo.	13-24 mo.	25-36+ mo.
Total	914	791	775
Developmental	.86	1.15	1.52
Therapy	(17.35)	(14.63)	(10.02)
Occupational	1.03	.63	.59
Therapy	(21.63)	(9.19)	(4.09)
Physical Therapy	1.73	.58	.26
	(31.99)	(7.53)	(1.81)
Speech Therapy	.62	1.93	2.49
	(16.46)	(25.87)	(17.49)
Total Hours	4.23	4.29	4.86
Across the Four	(87.76)	(57.21)	(33.41)
Types of Services			

A one-way analysis of variance revealed differences among the groups for each of the following:

- Mean number of total hours for developmental therapy, $F(2,2477)=21.95 p<.05$;
- Mean number of total hours for occupational therapy, $F(2, 2477)=112.31 p<.05$;
- Mean number of total hours for physical therapy, $F(2, 2477)=259.09 p<.05$;
- Mean number of total hours for speech therapy, $F(2, 2477)=33.53 p<.05$;
- Mean number of total hours across the four therapies, $F(2, 2477)= 100.64 p<.05$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test revealed significant differences between all age groups for all therapies, with children entering earlier receiving more total hours of therapy than children entering later.

Initial analyses had examined only the total number of hours received in First Steps; however, it was quickly discovered that this data is confounded by differences in the number of months children in each of the eligibility groups received First Steps services. The longer children are in the program, the more likely that they will receive higher amounts of service.

Table 4 also presents the mean number of hours per month received by children entering First Steps at different ages and who have received at least six months of service.

A one-way analysis of variance revealed differences among the groups for each of the following dependent variables:

- Number of hours per month for developmental therapy, $F(2,2458)=42.9 p<.05$;
- Number of hours per month for occupational therapy, $F(2, 2458)=34.98 p<.05$;
- Number of hours per month for physical therapy, $F(2, 2458)=266.06 p<.05$;
- Number of hours per month for speech therapy, $F(2, 2458)=306.32 p<.05$;
- Number of hours per month across the four therapies, $F(2, 2458)=8.78 p<.05$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test revealed:

- Children entering in their last year received significantly more developmental therapy than children entering prior to their second birthday, and the group of children entering in their first year received significantly less than the group entering between 13 and 24 months.
- Children entering in their first year received significantly more occupational therapy than children entering in their second or third year.
- The number of hours per month of physical therapy received was significantly different between all age groups, with children entering in their first year receiving significantly more physical therapy per month than those entering in their second year, who received significantly more physical therapy per month than those children entering in their third year.
- The number of hours per month of speech therapy received was significantly different between all age groups. Children who entered between 25 and 36+ months received the most speech therapy, followed by those entering between 13 and 24 months. Children entering before their first birthday received the fewest hours per month of speech therapy.

a. Descriptive Information for Families and Children with Different Eligibility Criteria

Table 5 presents frequency information for the groups of children and families with different eligibility criteria.

Table 5		
Frequency of Eligibility Categories in First Steps For All Children Entering 6/30/03 to 7/1/04		
Eligibility Category	N	%
Documented Delay: 20% in 1 area	3270	52.6
Documented Delay: 15% in 2 or more areas	1871	30.1
Diagnosed Physical/Mental Condition	900	14.5
Biological Risk	159	2.6
missing & informed clinical opinion	20	.3
Total	6213	100

b. Differences in Early Intervention Services with Different Eligibility Criteria

The following tables describe the differences in early intervention services for children and families with different eligibility criteria: Documented Delay 20% in 1 area; Documented Delay 15% in 2 or more areas; Diagnosed physical/mental condition; Biologically at risk. For the tables that contain only the first three eligibility criteria listed, the group of children who were biologically at risk was too small to include in the analysis.

Table 6 presents the average age at entry, number of months of service, and age at exit for each of the four eligibility groups.

Table 6				
Mean Age at Entry, Mean Number of Months in First Steps, and Mean Age at Exit for Children With Different Eligibility Criteria				
	Eligibility Criteria			
	Documented Delay: 20% in 1 area	Documented Delay: 15% in 2 or more areas	Diagnosed physical/mental condition	Biological Risk
Age at Entry	19.18	19.10	9.26	4.62
Age at Exit	29.0	31.22	26.65	14.98
Months Served	9.55	12.75	17.93	9.69

A one-way analysis of variance revealed differences among the eligibility groups for each of the following three dependent variables:

- Age at Entry, $F(4,6212)=304.56$ $p<.05$;
- Age at Exit, $F(4,2542)=50.05$ $p<.05$; and
- Months Served, $F(4,2542)=91.238$ $p<.05$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test revealed significant ($p<.05$) differences for age at entry:

- The group of children with biological risk factors entered significantly earlier than all other groups.
- The group of children with diagnosed physical or mental conditions entered significantly later than the group with biological risk factors, and significantly earlier than the groups with either 15% documented delay in two or more areas, or 20% documented delay in one area.
- There was no difference in mean age of entry between the groups of children with documented delays.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test revealed significant ($p<.05$) differences for age at exit:

- The group of children who are biologically at risk exit earlier than all other groups.
- The group of children with diagnosed physical or mental conditions exit later than children with biological risk factors, and earlier than both groups of children with documented delays.
- The group of children with a documented delay of 20% in one area exited later than those with biological risks and those with diagnosed physical/mental conditions, and earlier than the group of children with documented delay of 15% in one area.
- The group of children with documented delay of 15% in two or more areas exited later than all other groups

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test revealed significant ($p<.05$) differences for months of service received:

- The group of children with diagnosed physical or mental condition were in First Steps for the greatest number of total months.
- The group of children with diagnosed 20% delay in one area were in First Steps for a statistically significant longer time than the group with a diagnosed delay of 15% in two or more areas.

Table 7 presents the mean number of hours total service by children in three eligibility groups who have received at least six months of service.

Table 7			
Mean Number of Hours per Month of Services Received and Mean Total Hours of Services Received (in parenthesis) by Children in Three Eligibility Groups			
Type of Service	Eligibility Criteria		
	Documented Delay: 20% in 1 area	Documented Delay: 15% in 2 or more areas	Diagnosed physical/mental condition
N = 2480	1247	774	459
Developmental Therapy	.88 (8.26)	1.76 (20.72)	.90 (19.31)
Occupational Therapy	.44 (4.77)	1.06 (15.34)	1.15 (27.63)
Physical Therapy	.67 (7.21)	.85 (14.32)	1.65 (36.00)
Speech Therapy	2.94 (16.14)	1.99 (22.08)	1.41 (25.81)
Total Hours Across the Four Types of Services	1.72 (36.38)	1.70 (72.46)	1.25 (108.76)

A one-way analysis of variance (excluding the at risk group due to low numbers) revealed differences among the eligibility groups for each of the following dependent variables:

- Mean total hours developmental therapy, $F(2,2477)=90.40$ $p<.05$;
- Mean total hours occupational therapy, $F(2,2477)=147.29$ $p<.05$;
- Mean total hours physical therapy, $F(2,2477)=151.29$ $p<.05$;
- Mean total hours speech therapy, $F(2,2477)=28.68$ $p<.05$;
- Mean total hours therapy, $F(2,2477)=159.29$ $p<.05$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test revealed the following significant differences:

- Significant differences were found between all groups in the number of hours per month occupational therapy, physical therapy, and in the total hours of therapy received across the four types of developmental services.
- The mean total hours of developmental therapy received by children with a diagnosed physical or mental condition were greater than both the groups with 20% documented delay in one area and that of 15% documented delay in two or more areas.
- The mean total hours of speech therapy received by children eligible with a 20% delay in one area was significantly more than the group of children eligible due to diagnosed physical or mental condition.

Table 7 also presents mean number of hours per month received by children in three eligibility groups who have received at least six months of service.

A one-way analysis of variance revealed differences among the eligibility groups for each of the following dependent variables:

- Mean hours developmental therapy per month, $F(2,2458)=98.30$ $p<.05$;
- Mean hours occupational therapy per month, $F(2,2458)=97.17$ $p<.05$;
- Mean hours physical therapy per month, $F(2,2458)=73.38$ $p<.05$;
- Mean hours speech therapy per month, $F(2,2458)=12.41$ $p<.05$;
- Mean hours across the four types of services per month, $F(3, 6387)=70.89$ $p<.05$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test revealed the following significant differences:

- The number of hours of developmental therapy per month received by children with a documented delay of 15% in two or more areas was greater than the other eligibility groups.
- The number of hours per month of occupational therapy received by the group of children with 20% delay in one area was less than that received by those children with diagnosed physical or mental condition and those with a documented delay of 15% in two or more areas.
- The number of hours per month of physical therapy received by children with diagnosed physical or mental condition, was greater than that received by those children with a documented delay of 20% in one area and children with a documented 15% in two or more areas.
- The number of hours per month of speech therapy received by children with a documented delay of 20% in one area was greater than all other eligibility groups.

Results (Reported by Outcome)

Outcome #1: Children attain essential and important developmental skills

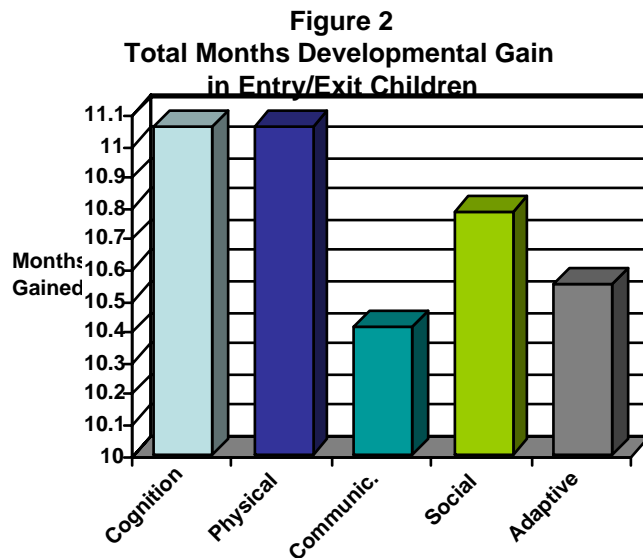
A primary outcome of First Steps is that children make developmental progress in the cognitive, communicative, physical, self-help, and social/emotional areas. To assess if First Steps is meeting this outcome, information was gathered from entering and exiting families in four areas:

1. Changes in the developmental age or level of children (between entry and exit)
2. Acquisition and demonstration of important developmental skills
3. Children's ability to function independently in typical family routines
4. Need for continued specialized services upon leaving First Steps

1. Changes in overall child development.

Developmental information from the initial Individualized Family Service Plan was compared with the developmental information gathered by the Service Coordinator for the Exit Interview to determine general developmental gains for the children who exited First Steps during the report period, and for whom entry data was collected.

Figure 2 illustrates the average months of change this group of children made across the five developmental areas.



a. Differences in Child Outcomes for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages

Table 8 presents the mean developmental gains in months for groups of children entering First Steps at different ages

Table 8			
Mean Months Developmental Gain for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages			
Child Outcome: Mean Months Developmental Gain	Age at Entry		
	birth-12 months	13-24 months	25-36+ months
N	237	247	173
Adaptive/self help skills	.78	.79	.42
Cognitive skills	.82	.78	.54
Communication skills	.77	.79	.53
Physical development	.80	.83	.55
Social/emotional skills	.81	.75	.46

A one-way analysis of variance revealed differences between the age groups for each of the following dependent variables:

- gains in adaptive/self-help skills, $F(2,653)=38.91 p<.01$;
- gains in cognitive skills, $F(2,640)=20.284 p<.01$;
- gains in communication skills $F(2,637)=8.72 p<.01$;
- gains in physical development, $F(2,647)=22.41 p<.01$; and
- gains in social/emotional skills, $F(2,650)=30.21 p<.01$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test at the $p<.05$ level of significance revealed that the group of children entering between 25 and 36 months made fewer months gain than those children entering earlier. It could be assumed that these children have less time in which gains can be made due to their later entry.

b. Differences in Child Outcomes for Children With Different Eligibility Criteria

Table 9 presents the mean developmental gains in months for each of the four eligibility groups: Documented Delay 20% in 1 area; Documented Delay 15% in 2 or more areas;; Diagnosed physical/mental condition. The group of children with biological risks was too small to include in this analysis.

Table 9
Mean Developmental Gains per Month for Children with Different Eligibility Criteria

Child Outcome: Mean Months Developmental Gain	Eligibility Criteria		
	Documented Delay: 20% in 1 area	Documented Delay: 15% in 2 or more areas	Diagnosed physical/mental condition
Adaptive/self-help skills	.75	.58	.69
Cognitive skills	.78	.63	.76
Communication skills	.87	.48	.67
Physical development	.80	.66	.72
Social/emotional skills	.75	.56	.76

A one-way analysis of variance revealed the following significant differences among the eligibility groups:

- gains in adaptive/self-help skills, $F(2, 644)=6.74$ $p<.05$;
- gains in cognitive skills, $F(2,631)=6.09$ $p<.05$;
- gains in communication skills $F(2,628)=20.63$ $p<.05$;
- gains in physical development, $F(2,638)=5.22$ $p<.05$; and
- gains in social/emotional skills, $F(2,641)=10.90$ $p<.05$

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test at the $p<.05$ level of significance revealed the following significant differences:

- For all areas except communication, the group of children with diagnosed 20% delay in one area made significantly greater gains than the group of children with diagnosed delay of 15% in two or more areas.
- The group of children in the diagnosed physical/mental condition made significantly greater gains than the group of children with diagnosed delay of 15% in two or more areas in both social and communication areas.
- The group of group of children with diagnosed 20% delay in one area made significantly greater gains in communication skills than the group with diagnosed physical/mental condition.

2. *Acquisition of Important Developmental Skills*

During Intake, entering families were asked to indicate which of 41 developmentally functional skills their children were able to perform. Upon exiting, families were once again asked to indicate which of the 41 skills their children were able to perform. The 41 skills included important functional skills such as walking, unfastening clothing, or using simple sentences. The results indicated:

- Eighty-five percent of the children for whom both Entry and Exit information was available demonstrated an increase in the number of important developmental skills (with an average of 10 skills gained per child);
- For all families who exited First Steps during this report period, children demonstrated, on the average, 29 of 41 or 71%.

We also asked families about the number of family routines such as dressing and undressing or mealtimes, in which their child participated as well as community routines such as shopping or going out to eat in which they were able to include their child.

Table 10 reports the mean number of skills, family routines and community routines gained by children entering First Steps at different ages.

Table 10
Mean Number of Skills, Family Routines and Community Routines Gained by Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages

Child Outcome	Age at Entry		
	birth-12 months	13-24 months	25-36+ months
N	148	224	238
Mean number of skills gained (total possible = 41)	14.09	9.45	5.31
Mean number of skills gained per month (total possible=41)	1.62	.87	1.11
Mean number of family routines gained (total possible =10)	2.73	1.61	1.09
Mean number of community routines gained (total possible=13)	1.70	.75	.67

A one-way analysis of variance revealed the following significant differences among the groups entering at different ages:

- Developmental skills gained, $F(2, 609)=48.87$ $p<.05$;
- Developmental skills gained per month, $F(2, 495)=5.25$ $p<.05$
- Family routines gained, $F(2, 373)=10.73$ $p<.05$
- Mean number of community skills gained, $F(2, 412)=3.85$ $p<.05$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test at the $p < .05$ level of significance revealed the following significant differences:

- Significant differences were found between all groups in the total mean skills gained.
- However, in the developmental skills gained per month, differences were found only between the group of children entering in their first year, and those entering between 13 and 24 months
- Children who enter First Steps in their first year of life, gain significantly more family routines *and* community routines than the other 2 age groups.

Table 11 presents the mean number of skills gained, the mean number of family routines gained and the mean number of community routines gained for children with different eligibility criteria.

Table 11
Mean Number of Skills, Family Routines and Community Routines Gained by Children With Different Eligibility Criteria

Child Outcome	Eligibility Criteria		
	Documented Delay: 20% in 1 area	Documented Delay: 15% in 2 or more areas	Diagnosed physical/mental condition
N=411	238	110	63
Mean number of skills gained (total possible=41)	9.0	10.19	16.91
Mean number of skills gained per month (total possible=41)	.82	.82	1.26
Mean number of family routines gained (total possible=10)	1.81	1.31	2.32
Mean number of community routines gained (total possible=13)	.78	.95	1.55

A one-way analysis of variance revealed the following significant differences among the eligibility groups:

- Developmental skills gained, $F(2, 391)=17.66$ $p < .05$;
- Developmental skills gained per month, $F(2, 391)=5.87$ $p < .05$
- Mean number of community skills gained, $F(2, 412)=3.85$ $p < .05$.

Post hoc comparisons using the Sheffe test at the $p < .05$ level of significance revealed the following significant differences:

- The group of children with diagnosed physical or mental conditions gained significantly more skills than either of the groups with documented developmental delays. Since this group also entered the First Steps system earlier, this number was confounded by the number of months in first Steps. However, when the mean number of skills gained per month was analyzed, this group still gained proportionally more skills per month.
- The group of children with diagnosed physical or mental conditions gained more community routines than the children with a documented delay of 20% in one area.

3. Independent Functioning in Everyday Family Routines

During both the initial Family Interview and Exit Interview, families were asked to indicate in which of 11 common daily routines their children were able to successfully participate. These routines included meal times, play times, dressing/undressing, getting up in the morning, and going to bed in the evening.

- 94% of children exiting from First Steps function independently in one or more of the 10 daily routines (average of 5.4 routines), with the majority of children demonstrating more than 6 family routines..
- Children for whom both entry and exit data are available gained on an average 1.15 routines.

4. Continued Need for Specialized Services

During the Exit Interview, families were asked a number of questions to determine if their children needed specialized services after First Steps. Findings from these families indicated that:

- Families who have been in the First Steps system for over six months predominantly exit because their child is three years old (58.4%).
- Few families seek services elsewhere (1.7%), and
- The remaining families exit because their child no longer needs services (39.9%).

Families who exited when their child was three years old were asked if their child would continue to need services to address the developmental areas following their exit from First Steps. Figure 3 illustrates the percent of children requiring services in each of the developmental areas.

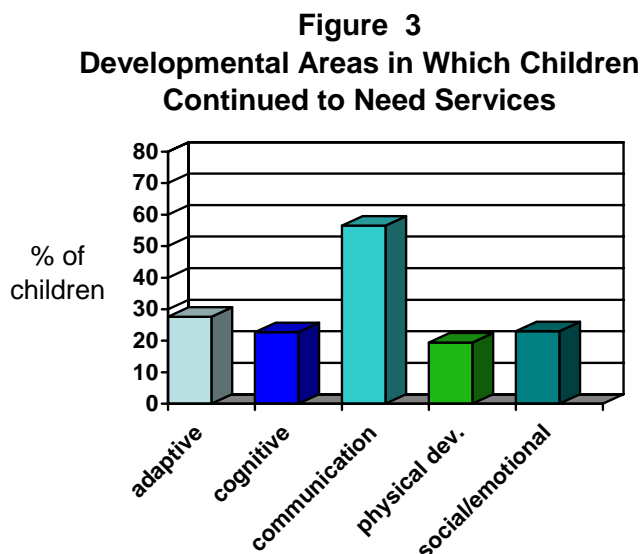


Figure 4
Types of Settings/Services
Following First Steps

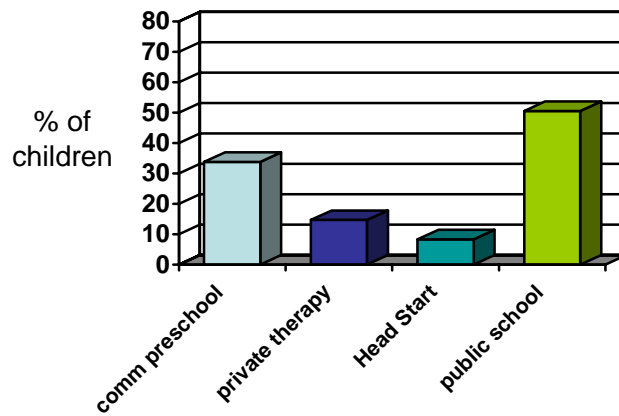


Figure 4 shows what types of services and in what settings children will be participating after they exit from First Steps.

Outcome #2: Children participate in inclusive community activities, settings, and routines.

The second outcome of First Steps is that children are able to participate in inclusive community activities, settings and routines with their families. This means that not only do children have the skills and behaviors to appropriately participate in various community settings, but that families have the knowledge, skills, and comfort level to facilitate their child's involvement in those settings. To assess if First Steps is meeting this outcome, information was gathered from entering and exiting families about their level of participation in community activities, settings, and routines

1. Participation in community activities, settings, and routines

As part of the Exit Interview, families were asked to identify to which community settings and activities their children had accompanied them in the past two weeks. A total of 13 different settings and activities were surveyed, including going to the grocery store, going to church or other religious service, child care, and visiting friends or neighbors. When surveyed, exiting families reported that:

- Most of the families (98.9%) had participated in two or more different community activities and/or settings in the past two weeks with their children; and
- On the average, these children routinely participated with their families in 5 or more of the 13 community activities, settings, and routines measured.

Table 12 presents data on the percentage of exiting three-year-old children that are able to participate all of the time in various family, community, and care and education settings.

Table 12
Percent of Three-Year-Olds Participating in Community Activities
“All the Time”

Community Settings and Activities	Percent “All the Time”
1. Grocery shopping	60.5%
2. Shopping, but not for groceries	59.5%
3. Visiting relatives, friends, or neighbors	70.0%
4. Going out to eat	50.3%
5. Attending religious services	37.4%
6. Toddler play groups	16.0%
7. Family day care home	15.8%
8. Child care center	13.2%
9. Child care for children with special needs	1.1%
10. Head Start	1.9%
11. Community activities with other children	17.4%
12. Mother's day out	3.7%
13. Go with family to community event	26.0%

Outcome #3: Children (and families) are safe, healthy, and well nourished.

A third outcome of First Steps is to promote the safety, health, and well-being of children and their families. It recognizes that in order to facilitate children's developmental progress, they and their families must be safe, healthy and well nourished. To assess if First Steps is meeting this outcome, information was gathered from entering and exiting families in three areas:

1. Access to health care
2. Knowledge of household safety measures
3. Knowledge of proper nutrition

1. Access to health care During the initial Family Interview and at the Exit Interview, families were asked questions concerning their child and family's access to health care, insurance, and childhood immunizations. By and large, most exiting families reported the presence of all positive indicators for children's health, including:

- seeing a doctor regularly (99.9%),
- being up-to-date on immunizations (97.7%), and
- having adequate health insurance (97.7%).

2. Knowledge of household safety measures

Entering and exiting families were asked if they knew about recommended common household safety measures. Again, most exiting families (99.9%) reported knowing about and following recommended household safety measures such as the use of smoke detectors, car seats and safe storage of poisons and firearms.

3. Knowledge of proper nutrition

Entering and exiting families were asked about their knowledge of proper nutrition and insuring their children have well-balanced diets. Again, most exiting families reported:

- knowing what to feed their children so that they have well-balanced meals (100%),
- and that their children do eat well and have balanced diets (91.4%).

Outcome #4: Families participate as members of the early intervention team and carry out recommendations that help them to help their child.

As their children's *first teacher*, families serve an important role in the early intervention process. This role is maximized when they understand and participate actively as members of the team, and carry out recommendations that help their child, the fourth outcome of First Steps. To assess if First Steps is meeting this outcome, information was gathered from entering and exiting families in two areas:

1. How much families know about First Steps and the roles families can take as members of their child's team, and
2. How families perceive their actual participation as members of their child's First Steps team.

1. Knowledge of First Steps and family roles

At both their entry into and exit from the First Steps system, families were asked if they understood the various components of the First Steps process and their potential role at each major step (e.g., evaluation, IFSP development, service provision). Results from the survey of exiting families indicated that:

- 100% of exiting families know and understand the First Steps process, including the purpose of First Steps evaluation, assessment, and the IFSP;
- 99.9% of exiting families know they can share information during these times, and 100% know they can agree or disagree with other members of the team.

2. Participation as team members

Also during entry and exit interviews, families were asked if they knew what roles they could assume during the First Steps process (e.g., share information), and if they had exercised any of these roles. Most families reported knowing about and exercising their roles, including:

- sharing information during evaluation and assessment (99.8%),
- contributing outcomes at the IFSP meeting (99.4%),
- expressing agreement with the team (99.6%), and
- doing things at home that are part of their IFSP and the team's recommendations (99.5%).
- Of the 698 families who responded, 18% indicated they ~~were able to~~ did express disagreement with other team members at their last IFSP meeting, and of that number 95% felt they had worked together to find a solution.

Outcome #5: Families are connected to other families and natural community supports for emotional support during self-identified times of need.

The fifth outcome of First Steps is to insure that families have access to the services and supports they need. These services and supports can be from the community as well as within their own circle of family and friends. To assess if First Steps is meeting this outcome, information was gathered from entering and exiting families in two areas:

1. How thoroughly families felt they knew of available information and resources
2. Whether families sought out and accessed resources when needed

1. Knowledge of available information and resources

Exiting families were asked if they knew about how to access other families and/or community resources when needed for emotional support. Results from the survey of exiting families indicated that most of the time, the majority of families (99%) knew they could access at least one resource, and 23.7% knew of four or five (out of a total of five) resources they could access.

In addition, most exiting families reported that they had information and resources to meet needs in the areas of:

- transportation (96.5%),
- housing (97.9%),
- jobs (96.5%), and
- education (97.6%).

2. Seeking out and accessing resources when needed

Exiting families were also asked if they had connected with other families or community supports for information and emotional support in the past three months. Just over 65.4% of the families reported accessing those resources some or most of the time.

Outcome #6: Families advocate by exercising their rights in requesting and choosing goals, services, and supports.

The sixth and final First Steps outcome to be included in this report closely aligns with the fourth outcome of membership on the early intervention team, and focuses on families having the knowledge and skills to advocate on behalf of their child and family. To assess if First Steps is meeting this outcome, information was gathered from entering and exiting families in two areas:

1. Knowledge of First Steps rights
2. Exercising their rights

1. Knowledge of First Steps rights

Entering and exiting families were asked if they know and understand their rights under First Steps. Results from exiting families indicated that most (98.1%) do. Families in Indiana's First Steps system are presented with their rights at the beginning of each team meeting, felt comfortable in their knowledge from the beginning of their affiliation with the program, and exited feeling equally confident in understanding their rights.

2. Exercising their rights

Entering and exiting families were also asked if they knew how to exercise these rights, including how to problem solve situations when disagreements arose with their service providers. Results from the survey of exiting families indicated that:

- 99.4% of the families reported knowing how to exercise their rights (e.g., share concerns and priorities, make program choices, request changes, and refuse permission);
- 99.2% of the families reported knowing how to work together with their service providers to find a solution if they disagreed with them; and
- 18.2% of the families reported disagreeing with their service providers in the past three months, with 91.1% of those families reporting that they were able to work together to find a solution.

In general, most families exiting First Steps reported having the knowledge and skills to advocate for their child in requesting and choosing services and supports.

Appendix B:

Transition Information

An additional focus of the First Steps system has been to assist families in the transition process when their child is no longer in need of services, or has turned three years old and no longer qualifies for First Steps services. For all exiting children who have been in First Steps for at least six months, **61%** had a transition meeting before 90 days; **17%** had one less than 90 days, and **21%** had no transition meeting. Interestingly, the majority of families who exit no longer needing First Steps services do not have a transition meeting **48%** while the majority of families who exit when their child turns three do have a transition meeting more than ninety days prior to their child's third birthday **83%**. For the families who did not have a planning meeting, **79%** did not indicate the reason for this; 10% indicated they chose not to have the meeting; 11% chose to wait until closer to their child's third birthday.

Transition Choices

Families who have been in the First Steps system for over six months predominantly exit because their child is three years old (58.4%). Few families seek services elsewhere (1.7%), and the remaining families exit because their child no longer needs services (39.9%).

Tables 13 and 14 presents further data on transition choices made by families as they exit the First Steps system. A Chi Square analyses was conducted for each set of data. Significant differences were found:

- among the groups that entered at different ages and their reasons for exiting, $X^2(4, N = 694) = 110.66, p < .01$.
- among the four eligibility conditions and their reasons for exiting, $X^2(4, N = 685) = 28.27, p < .01$.

Transition Choices for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages

Table 13

Transition Choices for Children Entering First Steps at Different Ages

Reason for Exiting First Steps	Age at Entry		
	0-12 mo.	13-24 mo.	25-36+ mo.
N	242	261	191
No longer needed	146	108	23
First Steps	(60.3%)	(41.4%)	(12.0%)
Seeking services	4	7	1
elsewhere	(1.7%)	(2.7%)	(.5%)
	92	146	167
Child is three	(38.0%)	(55.9%)	(87.4%)

It appears that, as a whole, very few families seek services elsewhere, which is true across all age groups. In addition, children who enter the system late (third year), tend to exit because they have turned three. The majority of children who enter early (first 12 months), tend to exit no longer needing First Steps services.

Transition Choices for Children with Different Eligibility Criteria

Table 14
Transition Choices for Children With Different Eligibility Criteria

Reason for Exiting First Steps	Eligibility Criteria		
	Documented Delay: 20% in 1 area	Documented Delay: 15% in 2 or more areas	Diagnosed physical/mental condition
N	345	195	145
No longer needed First Steps	163 (47.2%)	48 (24.6%)	59 (40.7%)
Seeking services elsewhere	7 (2.0%)	4 (2.1%)	1 (.7%)
Child is three	175 (50.7%)	143 (73.3%)	85 (58.6%)

Again, it appears that very few families seek services elsewhere. In addition, children with diagnosed 20% delay in one area or with diagnosed physical or mental conditions are more likely to exit no longer needing services than the group of children with a diagnosed delay of 15% in two or more areas.

Appendix C:

County by County Data Return Rates

Table 15: Return Rates of First Steps Entry Data by County

FIRST STEPS EVALUATION FOR JULY 1, 2004 THROUGH December 31, 2004: RETURN RATES BY COUNTY							
Children ENTERING First Steps							
COUNTY	Com- plete	Parents Unable to Complete	Missing All Forms	Incom- plete	Total	% Com- plete	Rank
Adams	14		2	1	17	82%	9
Allen	208	4	74	28	314	68%	30
Bartholomew	41		39	20	100	41%	68
Benton		1	2		3	33%	79
Blackford	3			3	6	50%	61
Boone	3		31	9	43	7%	91
Brown	1		3		4	25%	86
Carroll	4		2	2	8	50%	60
Cass	7		5	6	18	39%	73
Clark	85	3	24	8	120	73%	19
Clay	16		11	2	29	55%	55
Clinton	21	1	11	5	38	58%	49
Crawford	8		3		11	73%	22
Daviess	8		13	6	27	30%	82
De Kalb	18	1	7	6	32	59%	45
Dearborn	30		4	3	37	81%	10
Decatur	26		12	11	49	53%	56
Delaware	39		30	7	76	51%	58
Dubois	22		1		23	96%	3
Elkhart	114		49	27	190	60%	42
Fayette	17		7	3	27	63%	36
Floyd	47	2	34	16	99	49%	63
Fountain	5		4		9	56%	54
Franklin	15		5	3	23	65%	32
Fulton	1		11	4	16	6%	92
Gibson	16		2		18	89%	4

Grant	11	3	9	7	30	47%	64
Greene	4		17		21	19%	88
Hamilton	131	22	160	96	409	37%	74
Hancock	63		35	1	99	64%	35
Harrison	22		3	3	28	79%	13
Hendricks	37	1	33	16	87	44%	66
Henry	31		7	6	44	70%	26
Howard	22		46	18	86	26%	85
Huntington	10	12	10	3	35	63%	38
Jackson	38	1	10	13	62	63%	37
Jasper	12		7	1	20	60%	43
Jay	4		8		12	33%	78
Jefferson	26		6	12	44	59%	47
Jennings	26	1	8	3	38	71%	25
Johnson	93	2	58	30	183	52%	57
Knox	4		17		21	19%	89
Kosciusko	60	2	15	7	84	74%	17
La Porte	54		12	5	71	76%	15
Lagrange	17		7	5	29	59%	48
Lake	64	1	139	42	246	26%	84
Lawrence	9		14	8	31	29%	83
Madison	41	9	26	12	88	57%	52
Marion	447	30	440	263	1180	40%	69
Marshall	12		15	13	40	30%	81
Martin	4		6	1	11	36%	75
Miami	12		5	9	26	46%	65
Monroe	33		48	18	99	33%	77
Montgomery	35		12	5	52	67%	31
Morgan	16		20	17	53	30%	80
Newton	5		4	1	10	50%	59
Noble	18	1	3	4	26	73%	21
Ohio	1				1	100%	2
Orange	8		3		11	73%	23
Owen	9		4		13	69%	27
Parke	13		1	1	15	87%	5
Perry	6		1		7	86%	7

Pike	3				3	100%	1
Porter	87	1	19	6	113	78%	14
Posey	13		2	3	18	72%	24
Pulaski	2		10	5	17	12%	90
Putnam	18		10	1	29	62%	39
Randolph	10		17	1	28	36%	76
Ripley	24		4	1	29	83%	8
Rush	16		4		20	80%	11
Scott	11		7		18	61%	40
Shelby	63	5	21	4	93	73%	20
Spencer	5		6	1	12	42%	67
St. Joseph	192	1	59	44	296	65%	33
Starke	4		6		10	40%	71
Steuben	22	2	4	9	37	65%	34
Sullivan	2		8		10	20%	87
Switzerland	4		2	1	7	57%	50
Tippecanoe	91	6	42	31	170	57%	51
Tipton	8	3	6	1	18	61%	41
Union	2		2	1	5	40%	72
Vanderburgh	87	3	25	7	122	74%	18
Vermillion	8	1	4		13	69%	28
Vigo	46	2	20	3	71	68%	29
Wabash	8		8	4	20	40%	70
Warren	1			1	2	50%	62
Warrick	29		9	11	49	59%	46
Washington	21		5	2	28	75%	16
Wayne	64		10	7	81	79%	12
Wells	10		5	3	18	56%	53
White	7	2	4	2	15	60%	44
Whitley	25		3	1	29	86%	6
State Totals	3050	123	1917	941	6031	53%	

Table 16: Return Rates of First Steps Exit Data by County

<i>FIRST STEPS EVALUATION FOR JULY 1, 2004 THROUGH December 31, 2004: RETURN RATES BY COUNTY</i>						
Children EXITING First Steps						
<i>COUNTY</i>	<i>Complete</i>	<i>Parents Unable to Complete</i>	<i>Missing Forms</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% Com- plete</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Adams	2	3	1	6	67%	16
Allen	20	29	7	56	64%	20
Bartholomew	27	20	5	52	48%	46
Benton	1	1		2	50%	43
Blackford		3	1	4	100%	1
Boone	2	5		7	71%	13
Brown	3			3	0%	83
Carroll	2			2	0%	85
Cass	5	6		11	55%	32
Clark	48	17	5	70	31%	66
Clay	4	3		7	43%	52
Clinton	10	7	4	21	52%	39
Crawford	4	1	1	6	33%	63
Daviess	7	9	1	17	59%	22
De Kalb	8	15	1	24	67%	14
Dearborn	15	15	2	32	53%	35
Decatur	11	13	2	26	58%	27
Delaware	20	10		30	33%	62
Dubois	3	9	1	13	77%	10
Elkhart	51	69	3	123	59%	24
Fayette	16	5		21	24%	73
Floyd	38	13	7	58	34%	60
Fountain	2			2	0%	86
Franklin	5	10		15	67%	15
Fulton	7	1	1	9	22%	74
Gibson	4			4	0%	81
Grant	10	5	6	21	52%	40
Greene	7			7	0%	80
Hamilton	118	55	7	180	34%	61

Hancock	48	13		61	21%	77
Harrison	8	3	3	14	43%	51
Hendricks	7	10		17	59%	23
Henry	2	12		14	86%	6
Howard	29	18	1	48	40%	54
Huntington	2	7	1	10	80%	9
Jackson	16	12		28	43%	50
Jasper	7	2		9	22%	75
Jay	7	3		10	30%	68
Jefferson	12	17	2	31	61%	21
Jennings	14	16		30	53%	34
Johnson	37	48	4	89	58%	25
Knox	10			10	0%	79
Kosciusko	17	29	3	49	65%	18
La Porte	8	8		16	50%	41
Lagrange	7	13		20	65%	19
Lake	32	18	1	51	37%	58
Lawrence	11	3		14	21%	76
Madison	20	18	1	39	49%	45
Marion	372	144	34	550	32%	65
Marshall	17	11		28	39%	55
Martin	3		1	4	25%	72
Miami	10	13		23	57%	29
Monroe	24	17	1	42	43%	49
Montgomery	13	6	1	20	35%	59
Morgan	15	8	1	24	38%	57
Newton	1			1	0%	88
Noble	2	13	4	19	89%	4
Ohio	1			1	0%	89
Orange	3	1	2	6	50%	42
Owen	1			1	0%	90
Parke	2			2	0%	87
Perry		2	1	3	100%	2
Pike	1	2		3	67%	17
Porter	15	16	1	32	53%	36
Posey	4	3		7	43%	53

Pulaski	7	1	2	10	30%	69
Putnam	1	3		4	75%	11
Randolph	5	6	1	12	58%	26
Ripley	9	11		20	55%	31
Rush	6	4	1	11	45%	47
Scott	6	1		7	14%	78
Shelby	35	20	2	57	39%	56
Spencer	1	4	1	6	83%	8
St. Joseph	83	96	10	189	56%	30
Starke	2	1		3	33%	64
Steuben	4	20	2	26	85%	7
Sullivan	1			1	0%	91
Switzerland	3			3	0%	84
Tippecanoe	40	33	11	84	52%	38
Tipton	5	2		7	29%	71
Union	4			4	0%	82
Vanderburgh	33	29	3	65	49%	44
Vermillion	1			1	0%	92
Vigo	16	7		23	30%	67
Wabash	6	5		11	45%	48
Warren	1			1	0%	93
Warrick	11	13		24	54%	33
Washington	10	2	2	14	29%	70
Wayne	15	16	1	32	53%	37
Wells	1	8		9	89%	5
White	3	3	1	7	57%	28
Whitley	4	10		14	71%	12
State Totals	1541	1105	155	2801	45%	